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Granholm Announces Investigation Reveals Children Have Wide Access to Violent Video Games

Governor, Law Enforcement Renew Call for Legislation

LANSING – Governor Jennifer M. Granholm today unveiled the results of an undercover investigation that reveals children as young as age nine were able to purchase adult-rated video games containing violent and sexually-explicit material in nearly five out of 10 attempts. The investigations were conducted in Cass, Genesee, Ingham, Lenawee, Monroe, and Wayne counties in April.

“We have clear evidence that adult-rated games are falling into the hands of children,” said Granholm. “These investigations show that children have access to inappropriate material, and relying on a voluntary system to restrict sales to minors is not enough if we want to protect our children.”

The independent investigations conducted at the request of the Granholm Administration found that children, ranging from age 9 to 16, were able to purchase adult-rated video games (rated M for Mature or NC-17) at 26 of 58 stores in the six participating counties. Among those games purchased included Grand Theft Auto, Manhunt, Doom 3, Mortal Combat, and Resident Evil.

“We should all be disturbed by the availability of these games,” Granholm said. “It wasn’t just a problem in one store or one county, and it wasn’t just a problem in large cities or rural communities. Children across the state have access to games that depict graphic violence and sexual exploitation. We must act now.”

Granholm is urging lawmakers to pass pending legislation that would make the sale or rental of mature or adult-rated video games to minors a misdemeanor under Michigan law. In the 2005 State of the State Address, the Governor singled out State Senator Hansen Clarke of Detroit for introducing legislation to make the sale of adult-rated video games to minors a crime.

Granholm has been a long-time advocate on child protection issues. As governor, Granholm has repeatedly called on the Legislature to act on legislation prohibiting minors from being able to purchase or rent adult-rated video games and just this week called on lawmakers to pass tough laws to protect children from convicted sex offenders.

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As attorney general, the Governor formed the High-Tech Crime Unit in conjunction with the Michigan State Police to crack down on Internet child pornographers and child predators. Attorney General Granholm took on retailers who made alcohol and cigarettes available to children and shut down websites that sold the ingredients to make GHB, the "date rape" drug.

Granholm applauded law enforcement who conducted the undercover operations, including Genesee County Sheriff Robert Pickell, Genesee County Prosecutor David Leyton, and Wayne County Sheriff Warren Evans who attended today's press conference in Flint. Others participating in the investigation were Cass County Sheriff Joseph M. Underwood, Ingham County Sheriff Gene Wigglesworth, Ingham County Prosecutor Stuart Dunnings, Jr., Lenawee County Sheriff Lawrence Richardson, Jr., and Monroe County Sheriff Tilman L. Crutchfield.

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